

August 4, 2000

Voice of the People
Imperial Valley Press

Dear Editor:

The Cal-Fed plan currently being proposed would remove from production nearly a quarter of a million acres of California farmland. Cal-Fed calls that "unavoidable" But it can and should be avoided, and Cal-Fed should look harder for ways to reduce farmland losses.

Even though it would affect water supplies and land use throughout much of California, the Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program wants to finalize its plan without more public hearings. Cal-Fed released its final environmental report last month and made little effort to let people comment on it.

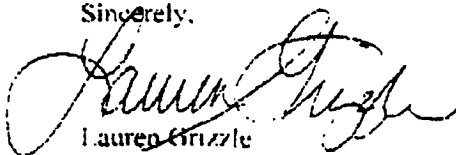
Those of us in the Imperial Valley know all too well the far-reaching implications of land retirement (fallowing). We should all be concerned about this dangerous, governmental intervening precedent.

Cal-Fed is promoting this plan under the auspices of environmental mitigation for the Bay-Delta. But, this shortsighted plan does not recognize agriculture as an important natural resource that feeds people, provides jobs and wildlife habitat simultaneously.

Cal-Fed must also recognize the need for water storage with adequate yield. That water will help sustain the environment in dry years. Otherwise, Cal-Fed will simply take the water away from farms, making the effect of droughts even more severe.

The Imperial Valley must not be naïve in thinking we would be exempt in any such plan. People only have until Aug. 21 to let Cal-Fed know what they think of its plans. Write to Cal-Fed at 1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814. We would be happy to assist.

Sincerely,



Lauren Grizzle
Executive Director
Imperial County Farm Bureau
Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers Assn.